



# 2021 A legacy of giving

The gift of a lifetime — Alumni create endowed scholarships — Celebrating commencement honorees

[Start reading](#)





# A lifetime of giving

Plant a seed and watch it grow. Discover how donors' legacies help Lynn build a better world with our students.

“A tree has roots in the soil yet reaches to the sky. It tells us that in order to aspire we need to be grounded and that no matter how high we go it is from our roots that we draw sustenance.”

Wangari Maathai

In 2013, the Lynn University Board of Trustees voted to name the beautiful oak-lined main road entering campus from Military Trail in honor of Helen Kelleher, Kathleen Clunan’s mother. Clunan is Lynn’s former archivist and one of Marymount College’s founding nuns. In 1966, when Kelleher passed away, a college friend donated money to plant over a dozen Live Oaks along the campus road.

Ever since, the trees have been central to life on campus and a symbol for the legacy of giving that supports the university today.

The oaks, banyans and other trees provide a peaceful, beautiful atmosphere. They constantly are moving, swaying gently in the breeze, and also in no hurry to go anywhere. At any given moment, trees across campus protect from the sun and sudden sun showers. Guests can witness students or campers taking shelter under their branches as classes and activities enjoy the outdoors. Other brave souls venture to new heights, sitting amongst leaves, squirrels and other creatures.

These qualities—strength, rootedness and protection—remind us that we are part of something greater than Lynn. Our legacy, like the trees, depends on our ability to take root today to create a better tomorrow.

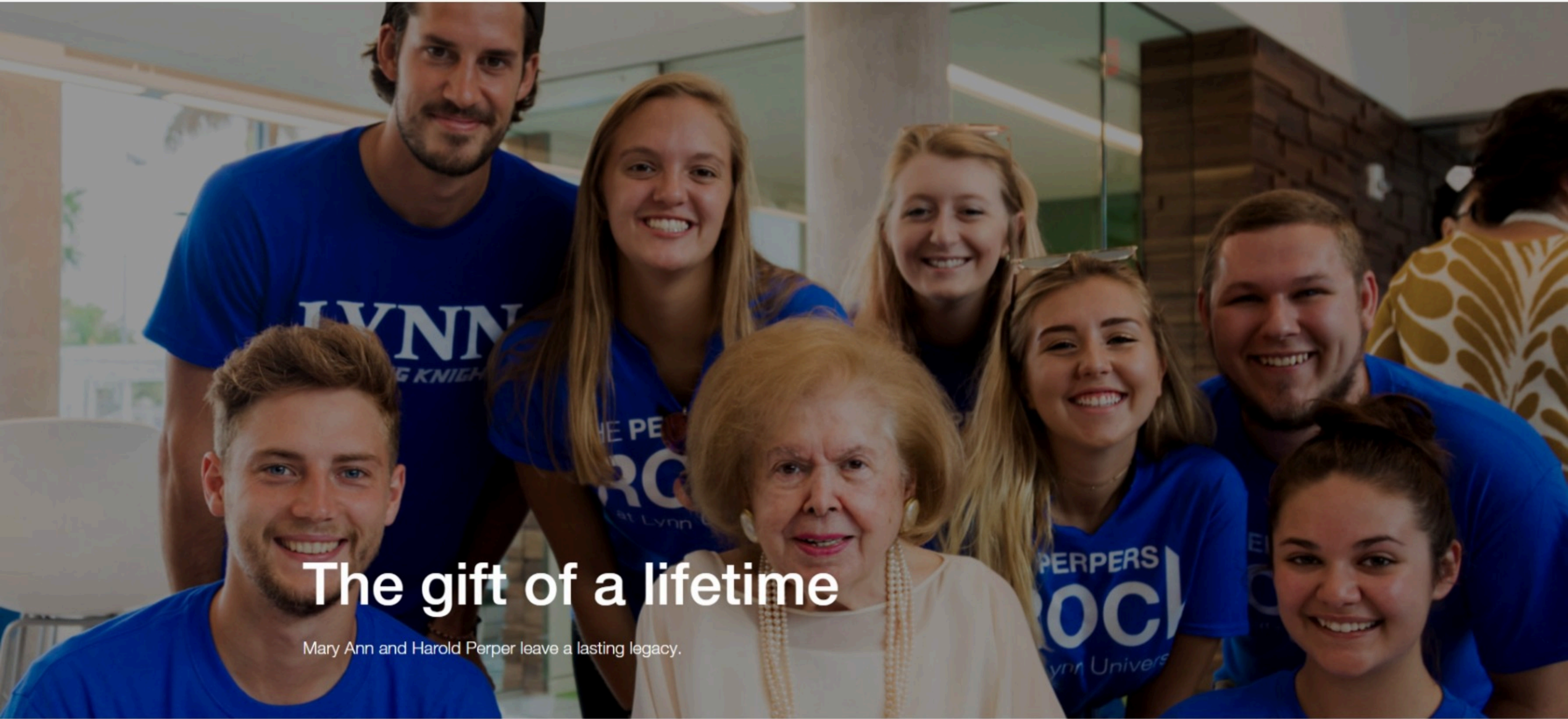
In this edition of LynnSight, hear the stories of donors whose gifts today are ensuring the future for generations of Lynn students.



Share this







# The gift of a lifetime

Mary Ann and Harold Perper leave a lasting legacy.

Mary Perper once said, "It's like a family at Lynn. I just love everything about it."

That love for Lynn University is reflected all around campus. The late Mary and late Harold Perper already have left an indelible impression on the Lynn community and helped make Lynn a home-away-from-home for students for nearly 30 years, and yet, their generosity lives on.

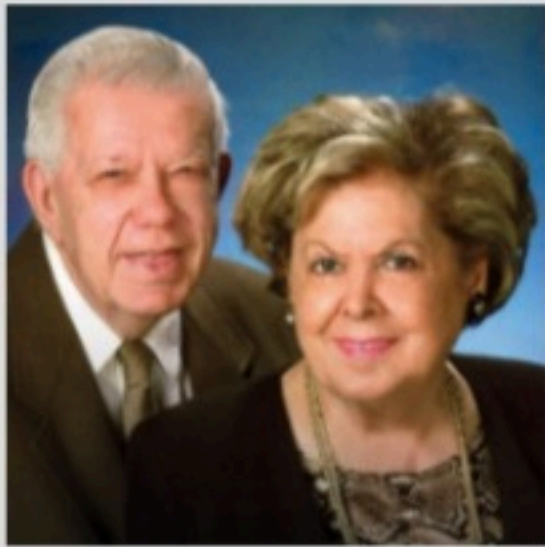
A planned gift worth over \$10 million from the Perper estate ensures their legacy will inspire generations to come. As the second-largest gift in the university's history, it represents the Perpers' commitment to positively impacting the Lynn community in actionable ways—something they demonstrated time and time again. From supporting strategic initiatives to addressing specific needs on campus, the Perpers' passion for making a difference in students' lives is evident in the various buildings and facilities that bear their namesake across campus.

"Difference-making starts with the heart. We are forever grateful to Harold and Mary for their generous contributions over the years," said President Kevin M. Ross. "We are deeply appreciative of the meaningful advancements they've supported across campus. They were exceptional visionaries who loved Lynn, and we are forever grateful."

The new gift will support scholarships, capital projects like the Perper Residence Hall, and immediate needs for generations to come.

"Difference making starts with the heart. We are forever grateful to Harold and Mary for their heartfelt, generous contributions over the years."

President Kevin M. Ross



## The Perper legacy

The generosity of Mary and Harold Perper over the years helped make Lynn what it is today.

[Learn more](#)

## A closer look

Mary and Harold Perper were trailblazing executives. They married in 1959 and became hotel franchisers from the 1960s through the 1990s. In retirement, their hospitality continued as they turned their focus from creating a positive customer experience to ensuring a positive student experience on Lynn's campus.

"They loved to provide support that improved our students' experiences," said Gregory J. Malfitano '73, '75, senior vice president of development. "They didn't help us build just any residence halls, they helped us build suites. They didn't only make intramural athletics possible, they made them possible for every student, and even during the nighttime."

Their planned gift is unrestricted—allowing the university's administration to determine how to use the funds for the future.

"In the same way that no one told them how to run their business, they believed that we know what's best for our students," said Malfitano. "They believed in our mission and supported it. With their unrestricted gift, we can ensure that their legacy will continue to do so for the future."

The unrestricted funds provide great flexibility. Traditionally such resources help cover expenses related to student services and program development, fund grants for scholarships and professorships, and provide other immediate needs. Yet undesignated, Malfitano expects that the Perpers' gift will support scholarships, capital projects like the Perper Residence Hall, and immediate needs for generations to come.

"The Perpers believed in us so wholeheartedly," said Malfitano. "They worked hard, and every project they contributed to was state of the art. Having funding dedicated to future years allows us to plan with more foresight. We miss seeing them on campus, and we're grateful to know that their legacy will continue through this gift. However we use it, I know we will make them proud."



## Read about the Perpers' recent gifts



Nov. 22, 2019  
Remembering Mary Perper



Feb. 20, 2019  
The dream begins with a locker room



Feb. 7, 2019  
Service with style



June 1, 2016  
The Mary and Harold Perper Residence Hall



Jan. 11, 2016  
Lynn dedicates Perper Field



Oct. 21, 2015  
Perpers help Lynn stay focused on the future

Share this







# For now & for later

How leaving a legacy serves a dual purpose.

Most donors start giving through one-time, or even recurring, donations from their cash flows. While these donations are greatly appreciated by their recipients and may intentionally be planned as part of a donor's annual budgeting process, they frequently have a more short-term vision than gifts offered through planned giving.

Planned giving, however, arranges donations in the present to distribute in the future. A planned gift refers to any significant gift, made in a lifetime or perpetuity, as part of a donor's overall financial or estate planning.

"Financial advisors take advantage of various tools to help donors establish a planned gift," said Senior Vice President of Development and Administration Gregory J. Malfitano '73, '75. "The donor needs only two things: a desire to make a difference and something to make a difference with. There is no minimum age or income requirement for establishing planned gifts."

## One plan, multiple benefits

Donors establish planned gifts for various reasons. For example, a planned gift costs nothing today but allows hard work to begin in the future. In some cases, it can provide income to the donor or their family or transfer wealth intestate. It additionally establishes an economically incentivized plan that leverages legal and tax strategies. Most planned gifts take the form of life insurance, real estate, personal property, equity or cash.

"Many families have two goals: reduce tax liability now and in the future and have a say in how their funds make an impact," said Malfitano. "Planned giving allows them to do both."

Planned giving provides many benefits:

- Make a contribution never thought to be possible
- Have structure and flexibility on the timing and size of a gift
- Protect a family's future and leverage assets
- Mentor others in philanthropy
- Transfer wealth to the next generation
- Support an organization dear to the heart
- Fund long-term or future projects

## Contributions matter

Donors can make extraordinary differences during and beyond their lifetime by investing in what is important—the people, the causes, the ideas that inspire. In turn, gifts may inspire others to do the same.

At Lynn University, planned gifts help secure Lynn's future, transform students' lives, and ensure educational opportunities and a standard for excellence for generations to come.

- **Scholarships:** Make college attainable for future generations of students
- **Professorships:** Add world-class instructors to Lynn's faculty
- **Programs:** Provide tutoring, theater or athletics
- **New projects:** Fund an as-yet unimagined initiative far in the future

Learn more about [donors creating a legacy](#) at Lynn.

## Making a planned gift at Lynn is simple.

Share in the vision to help students thrive and help address the challenges facing tomorrow—a reflection of love for Lynn.

[Learn more](#)

Share this





# Creating a legacy

Planned contributions make an impact that extends well beyond a donor's lifetime.

These generous donors are the everyday heroes that have made an extraordinary difference in the lives of students through their planned gifts to Lynn University. While their areas of interest may vary, their goals are rooted in commonality: Making a difference for generations to come and inspiring others to do the same.

## René Malès

*A legacy for pianists*



### The gift of a bequest

René Malès' bequest to the Conservatory of Music's Piano Studio struck the perfect note.

"I have a great interest in the development of kids with piano talent," said Malès, a music enthusiast and former utility executive. His planned gift is the capstone of many annual gifts he has made.

Dr. Roberta Rust, head of the Piano Studio, said, "I am deeply honored that he chose to direct his gift to the outstanding pianists in our conservatory."

## Freed Scholarship

*A legacy for music majors*



### The gift of an endowed scholarship

Daniel Freed died in 2018, but his generosity lives on. Freed and his wife, Shirlee, founded the Freed Scholarship for music majors in 1999, then added a bequest in 2007.

"They gave faithfully to the annual fund, supported events and created an endowment—then added to the endowment with a planned gift," said Lisa Miller, director of annual programs.

Planned gifts provide for full-tuition scholarships, drawing in the most talented student musicians, academic scholars and athletes.

## Yvonne Boice

*A legacy for international students*



### Bequest for Circle of Flags

Boice's idea of displaying more than 100 flags to represent the home countries of Lynn's student body came to pass in 2002, when the flags were installed at the main entrance. In 2016, by naming Lynn in her will, Boice funded an endowment for the ongoing maintenance of the flags.

"Having traveled to 150 countries, I understand the importance of fostering cultural awareness in our youth," she said. "I am honored that the Yvonne S. Boice Circle of Flags will continue to represent that mission for years to come."

## Linda Melcer

*A legacy for future musicians*



### Gift of her IRA

Linda Melcer designated Lynn's Conservatory of Music as a beneficiary of her IRA. As a financial planner, she can list numerous benefits of making a gift of this type, but she can also list the benefits of leaving a legacy to a university that means so much to her personally.

"I worked hard for that IRA," she said. "I would never donate for recognition, but I would really like to encourage other people to make a planned gift. It's a wonderful way to give back. Leaving a legacy gift tells my children and grandchildren what was important to me. And it allows me to say thank you to Lynn."

## Joseph Pucci '11

*A legacy for future students*



### The gift of an insurance policy

Not every 29-year-old has the forethought and generosity of Joseph Pucci '11, a financial services manager in Philadelphia who named Lynn one of the beneficiaries of his life insurance policy several years ago. Pucci is the youngest member of Lynn's Legacy Society, a group that honors donors who have made a planned gift to the school.

As an alumni ambassador and volunteer for Lynn's day of caring, Pucci encourages other young alumni to give back to Lynn, too.

"If you can't give now," he said, "put something in place for the future."

## The Legacy Society welcomes you!

Planned giving is a Lynn tradition that spans five decades.

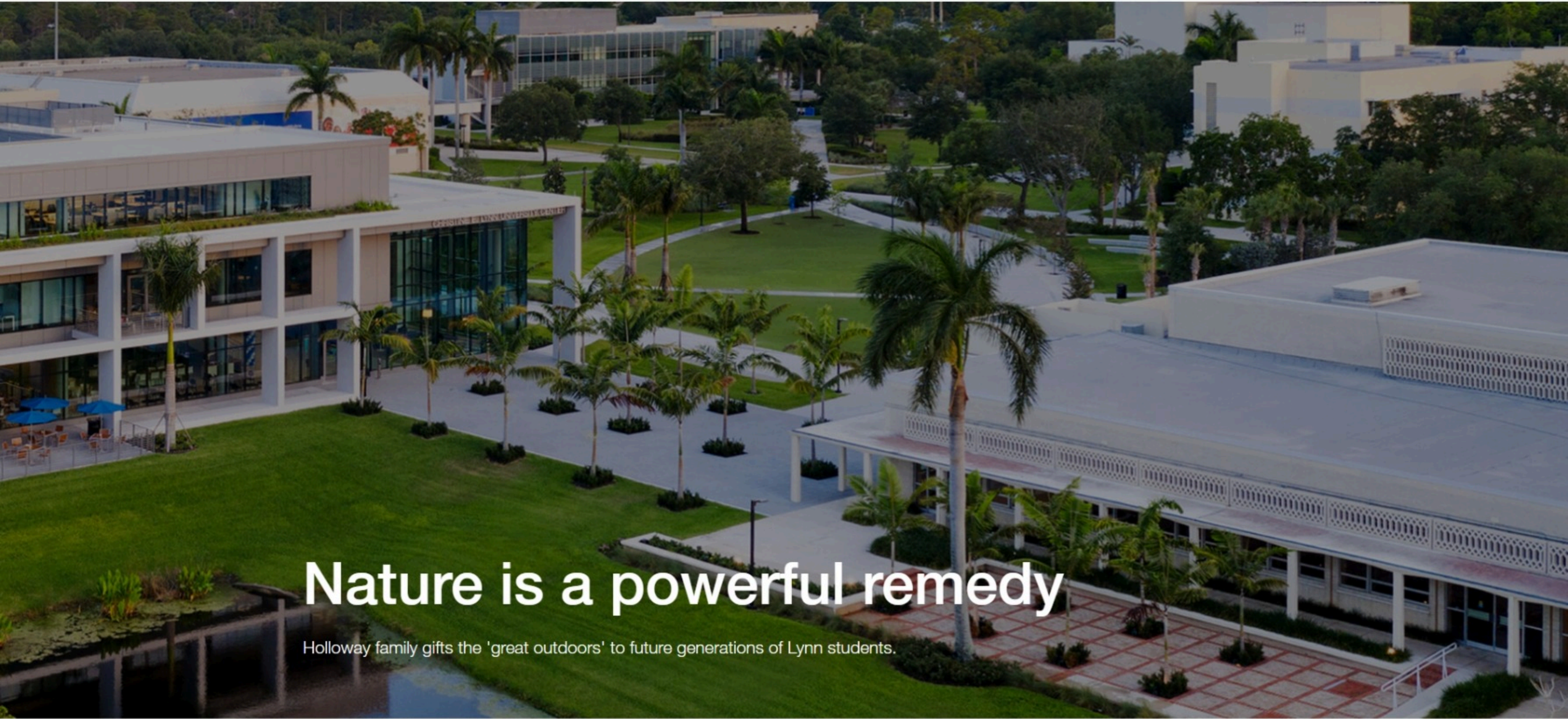
The Legacy Society is Lynn's premier planned giving society, created to honor donors who become heroes to our students by providing for the university in their estate planning.

With any gift designating Lynn University as its beneficiary, you become a member of the Legacy Society and receive the following benefits:

- A permanent legacy at Lynn
- Invitations to members-only events throughout the year
- Networking with other donors and university administrators
- Recognition at events for programs directly impacted by your planned gift

Interested in learning more? Contact the [Office of Development](#) for information about designations for specific programs or initiatives.





# Nature is a powerful remedy

Holloway family gifts the 'great outdoors' to future generations of Lynn students.

Green, natural spaces have made the shortlist for years. Urban parks grant city dwellers a breath of fresh air, while hospital gardens help patients experience tranquility and respite. According to the National Institutes of Health, the beauty of the great outdoors is owed to how little nature demands from humans. It doesn't require our direct attention, so it allows us to recover from mental fatigue and restore our attention and energy.

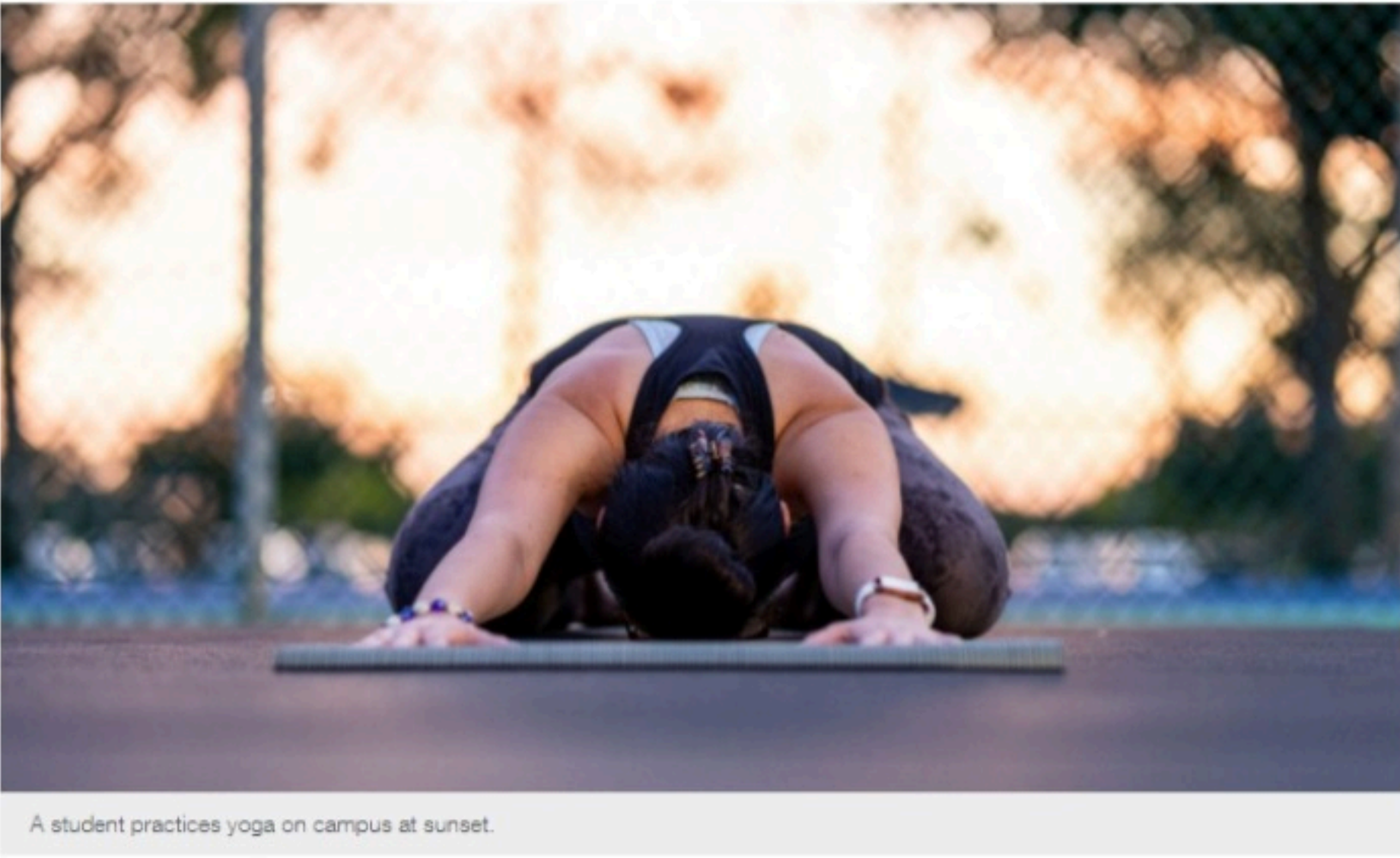
The designers responsible for crafting Lynn University's future [Snyder Center for Health and Wellness](#) (pictured above, bottom-right) understood the power of nature. It's part of the reason the building perches at the edge of a lake, steps away from the Christine E. Lynn Park and encircled in lush green lawns. The location near the center of campus is also intentional—and so is its planned outdoor area.

The Holloway Family Foundation recently gifted \$150,000 to realize plans for the outdoor fitness area.

"We were very glad the outside fitness area was available to support," said foundation Director John Holloway. "Personal health is the true cornerstone to having longer, more fruitful lives."

The Snyder Center brings all wellness efforts—mental, physical and social—into one space near the Christine E. Lynn University Center. Its location makes building healthy habits a practical reality, as students pass the facility each day on their way to and from classes, sports and social activities.

"Besides enjoying fitness activities from its beautiful location, we're hopeful that students will be able to easily observe others [as they pursue their fitness goals] and be motivated to become involved," said Holloway.



A student practices yoga on campus at sunset.

## A family affair

When looking at universities for Holloway's son Maxwell to attend, the family was grateful to discover Lynn.

"Through the initial virtual tour, we discovered the academic programs and the intentional smaller, personalized campus experience," said Holloway. "We appreciated the emphasis on international diversity and the Boca Raton location, which is close to us in central Florida."

As Maxwell pursued his studies at Lynn, the family's appreciation for the tight-knit community continued to grow, as did their support.

"We very much try to encourage an unanimous agreement on pledges," Holloway said. "We will not approve pledges without a 4:1 majority." The foundation approved its commitment to the Snyder Center's outdoor fitness area in late 2020 and is looking forward to seeing the building open.

## Naming opportunities

Limited opportunity to support the future Snyder Center remain.

- Fitness Center, room **102**
- Group Studio, room **103**
- Cycle Studio, room **111**

If you would like to contribute to the Snyder Center for Health and Wellness, contact [Gregory J. Malfitano](#).

Share this





# Seedlings: Endowed scholarships take root

Two alumni establish scholarships to help students pursue their dreams and overcome challenges.

Endowed scholarships, like planned gifts, keep giving long after they're established.

When donors create an endowed scholarship, the university invests the donation and funds scholarships from the interest the investment earns. Donors to endowed scholarships determine the qualifications that make a potential recipient eligible for their scholarships.

Learn more about two recent opportunities alumni created for current and future Lynn students.



July 22, 2021  
Phillip Gursahaney '21

Phillip Gursahaney celebrates his academic accomplishment by giving back.



July 23, 2021  
Emmanuella Sainthilaire '19

Scholarship turns academic study into social action plan that addresses food and housing insecurity on campus.

Share this







# 2021 graduate creates endowed scholarship

Phillip Gursahaney celebrates his academic accomplishment by giving back.

Graduating from Lynn University is the result of hard work and grit. For Phillip Gursahaney '21, it was also a defining moment that marked a new beginning personally and professionally.

Gursahaney began his academic career at an Alabama university where he majored in general business. At first, he enjoyed the sizable student body that filled oversized classrooms. Then he began losing focus and lacking the determination to keep going.

"I needed a more intimate place to learn," he said. "My sweet spot is 15–25 students in a classroom, where the professor knows my name."

Gursahaney left that university and enrolled as a hospitality major at Lynn, although he did not fully know what he wanted to study. A short while later, he again wasn't connecting with the class material and started failing his courses.

"I had a lot of academic troubles," Gursahaney said. "I knew something needed to change."



Phillip Gursahaney takes a picture with his family on graduation day.

He sought tutoring services, which helped him build better habits, and he visited the Academic Advising office to discuss his future at Lynn.

"When I sat down with an advisor and began explaining my interests, she said, 'Sweetheart, you are in the wrong major,'" Gursahaney said. "Without a blink of an eye, she signed me up for the B.S. in entrepreneurship program."

Gursahaney was immediately captivated by the entrepreneurship coursework and his professors. He began incorporating the topics he studied into his daily life and visualized how they might shape his future career. By graduation, Gursahaney had transitioned himself off academic probation and onto the Dean's List. He credits his success to Lynn's advisors, professors and the program's design.

In May 2021, he took part in Lynn's virtual commencement, where he [gave thanks to his supportive family](#).

"When I thought about finally graduating, I cared most about finishing strong and making the people who helped me along the way proud," Gursahaney said. "We all knew that Lynn was my saving grace."

His accomplishment inspired his family foundation, the Gursahaney Family Foundation, to help another entrepreneurship student succeed.

The Gursahaney family pledges to give \$10,000 for five years to establish the Gursahaney Family Endowed Scholarship in Entrepreneurship. Once funded, Lynn's Office of Student Financial Services will award the endowment's scholarship annually to a deserving entrepreneurship student who would otherwise not be able to attend college.

"Nothing would bring me more joy than to see someone use this scholarship and to even meet them one day," Gursahaney said. "I want to help create a better future for a person in need."

One month after graduation, Gursahaney landed a position as a regional account manager for a local Florida business. He's inspired to stay involved with his family's foundation and contribute when he can.

"I know that not everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the causes they love," he said. "But if you're thinking about it, do it. If you can, why not."

"Nothing would bring me more joy than to see someone use this scholarship and to even meet them one day. I want to help create a better future for a person in need."

**Phillip Gursahaney '21**

Share this





# Lynn alumna creates scholarship to help homeless students

Scholarship turns academic study into social action plan that addresses food and housing insecurity on campus.

Passing him on the pristine Lynn University campus, where it is easy to feel at ease and youthfully optimistic in the Florida sunshine, you would never guess 22-year-old Jack could be a homeless student. It was hard even for him to believe.

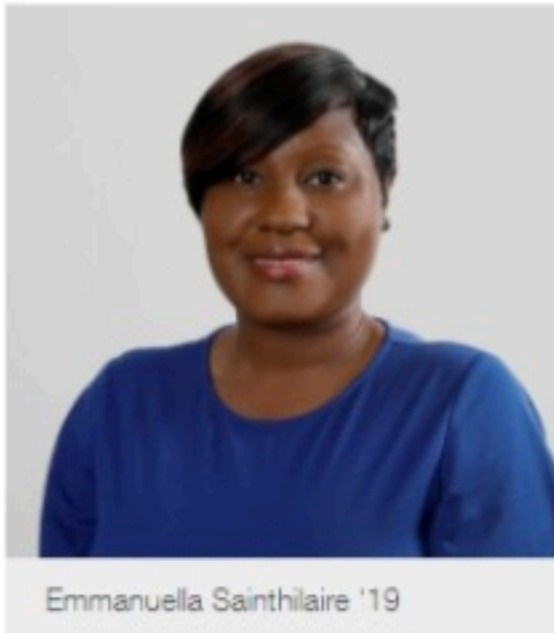
"I did not really think I was homeless," he said. "But then, at a certain point I had to say it. I was actually homeless. Everything I had was in my car."

Earlier, Jack was on track with his studies and living off-campus with his sister and a roommate when tragedy struck. His apartment burned down, leaving him with no savings and nowhere to go.

"I stayed in a hotel. I stayed with a couple of friends for a couple of weeks," Jack said. "I just floated around."

After meeting Jack—a pseudonym—and a handful of other Lynn students through research for her dissertation, Emmanuella Saintthilaire '19 felt moved to transform her academic study about hunger and homelessness among college students into an accessible social action plan. She created the Education is the Key Scholarship. It is now an active program that assists Lynn students experiencing food and shelter insecurity.

"Once I started the interview process with these students, it hit me," Saintthilaire said. "Research is one thing, but hearing the stories of their struggles firsthand, I couldn't ignore this invisible population. Like many people, I just assumed that because Lynn is a private school in Boca, if you're a student there, you couldn't possibly be experiencing homelessness and hunger. But this problem exists everywhere."



Emmanuella Saintthilaire '19



According to the [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness](#), 27,487 people in Florida experienced homelessness on any given day in 2020. Of those, 1,331 were young adults aged 18–24. Nationwide, 36% of American college students consider themselves housing insecure, with 9% [identifying as homeless](#). Among them was 19-year-old Chelsi, a Lynn student who called her residence hall home during the school year but struggled to find shelter during academic breaks.

"I have been trying to figure out where I am going to stay for summers," said Chelsi (a pseudonym). "Summer is the hardest because it is a three-month period. Thank goodness I have good friends I can stay with for winter break because winter is just two weeks. I lucked out, so I didn't have to stay on a bench outside or anything."

Saintthilaire believes luck should have no role in making sure students like Chelsi and Jack remain in school, housed and fed. The Education is the Key Scholarship is a flexible, dispersed-as-needed fund for students who find themselves missing meals and needing a place to lay their head at night.

"All of the students I interviewed work. And they all receive financial aid and scholarships for tuition," Saintthilaire said. "This isn't about mismanagement of their money. Aid only covers what they need on campus. There is no additional money for unforeseen circumstances or, like Chelsi, for spring or winter break."

“We take for granted the power we have as individuals to change someone's life ... Just a little extra can help a student make it through.”

Emmanuella Saintthilaire '19

Larger Florida schools provide a free food pantry and a fully staffed department to help address shelter and food insecurity. Lynn's homeless and hungry students are on a smaller campus that can provide personalized and discreet solutions.

"Perhaps as the scholarship grows, we can create a food pantry or develop more resources to help these students find long-term housing," said Saintthilaire, now a program manager at Miami-Dade College. "But for now, we're focusing on the hunger issue by dispersing funds through students' meal cards."

The scholarship is a collaborative effort of key individuals on campus: annual giving staff, financial aid and academic advisors, student affairs personnel, faculty, dining hall managers, and the education and counseling departments, whose undergraduates helped Saintthilaire develop the concept. Aware of the stigma associated with hunger and homelessness, any of them may tactfully identify students in need, then provide them with a scholarship-funded meal card, no questions asked, no waiting for approval—and absolutely no shame.

Jennifer Lesh, associate professor in the College of Education, was Saintthilaire's professor and evaluated her dissertation. Lesh wasn't surprised that Saintthilaire's study of student hunger and homelessness evolved into a sustainable social impact project, sincere in its concern for each student's dignity and success.

"We take for granted the power we have as individuals to change someone's life," Saintthilaire said. "Anybody at any time can become food insecure or shelter insecure—the pandemic has taught us that. Just a little extra can help a student make it through."

A [National Institutes of Health](#) study from February 2021 found that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in nearly 60% of U.S. college students becoming less food secure. A well-documented negative correlation exists between food insecurity and academic performance, affecting student grade point average, attendance and graduation rates.

As is true of homeless and hungry students across the country, Saintthilaire's research participants come from diverse backgrounds. Some aged out of the foster system, some from abusive homes and others from supportive but low-income single-parent households. Still, she identified commonalities in their experiences and their determination to overcome all obstacles.

"They have so much perseverance," she said. "Their whole goal is to put themselves in a better circumstance, to get out of homelessness, to find a good job to provide for themselves and their families so they're never worried about their next meal. What motivates them is earning their degree. That's the light at the end of the tunnel."

That certainly was true for Jack.

"I was like, well, if you do not graduate, you are not going to be able to do better than you are doing now," he said. "Stuff happens, but I'm still okay. I had professors who helped me out, and so I was able to get it done."

Of the 10 students in Saintthilaire's study, nine have graduated, Jack among them.

If you would like to contribute to the [Education is the Key Scholarship fund](#), please contact [Sherry A. Henry](#).

Share this







# True blue

Lynn's loyal arts supporters share the importance of generosity.

The institution may be the same, but the culture is continually developing, expanding and even disrupting traditional models of higher education. With so much change, we took a moment to catch up with two of Lynn University's longtime donors who've helped usher the university along its journey, time and again. We wanted to know how they used their time, talent and treasure to do great work on behalf of our students and why they just can't get enough of Lynn.

## Debra McGriff

*Celebration of the Arts and Lynn University Conservatory of Music*



### What's your connection with the university?

I'm a student accounts representative in the Student Financial Services department. I've had the pleasure of working at Lynn for 10 years. I regularly interact with students and their parents, which I truly enjoy.

### How do you support Lynn?

I like to support musical endeavors and performing arts. I donate to our Conservatory of Music, which delivers performances from gifted musicians, and the Celebration of the Arts, Lynn's annual variety-style show featuring talented students within the drama program.

### Why is philanthropy important to you?

It's important to give back where you can, when you can, for the success of Lynn students. Not only does the contribution help them, but it also provides a way for students to learn the importance of helping others. I hope deserving students continue the "giving" trend in the future.

### What would you say to someone who's considering giving back?

Find something you're passionate about, and explore how you can get involved. Remember that the amount you give doesn't matter, just take that first step.

## Ellen and Alvin Perlman

*Lynn University Conservatory of Music*



### What's your connection with the university?

When we moved to Florida nearly 30 years ago, we discovered Lynn's Conservatory of Music. We've attended memorable performances that have inspired our long-term commitment to support the talented performers.

### Which areas at Lynn do you support?

We support the conservatory and its student musicians. The students represent national and international talent, and their future careers are living tributes to Lynn's commitment to academic excellence and professional achievement.

### Why are the arts important to you?

Music, art and the theater have had a profound effect on our lives while we lived in the U.S. and served abroad in the diplomatic corps. We experienced how music strengthens bonds between nations and became strong supporters of the creators and performers.

### What's your advice for those wanting to give back?

We continually look forward to Lynn's concerts and performances. We urge others to support the conservatory—it enlivens culture here in Boca Raton, but its reach far surpasses Florida through Lynn's international students.

Share this







# Let us entertain you

Live performances coming soon.



Share this





# Commencement Celebrating our 2020 and 2021 honorees

Lynn commemorates success and memorializes contributions to the Lynn community.

## An annual tradition, reimagined

The college experience is full of longstanding and reaffirming rituals. Commencement, the end-of-spring semester celebration punctuated by a looping rendition of *Pomp and Circumstance*, is a tradition beloved by graduates, faculty and administration alike.

In 2020, Lynn University graduates celebrated the end of the semester with a virtual [Confetti Challenge](#) on social media. This year, the classes of 2020 and 2021 combined celebrations in a new format—a ceremony that honored over 1500 graduates on a virtual commencement stage.

The university awarded special acknowledgments during the ceremony: two honorary degrees and two distinguished alumni.

"We grant the awards based on a candidate's eminence throughout their career, scholarship activities or other public services on and off campus," said Senior Vice President for Development and Administration Gregory J. Malitano '73, '75. "The awards commemorate community members' successes and memorialize their contributions to our Lynn family. They're honors worthy of great celebration."

## Meet the recipients

### Honorary Degrees

Lynn presents honorary degrees to individuals to symbolize their exceptional contributions to society or lifetime achievement in their field.



Yvonne S. Boice  
Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa



Jamie S. and Stephen F. Snyder  
Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa

### Distinguished Alumni Award

Lynn presents the Distinguished Alumni Award to honor graduates who have achieved success in their chosen field, stayed active in the Lynn community and have made a positive difference in their local or global communities.



June 21, 2021  
Kuda Biza is Lynn University's  
2021 Distinguished Alumni



Oct. 29, 2020  
David Berger '98 wins the 2020  
Distinguished Alumni Award

## Looking forward, celebrating in person

For many, the May 15 virtual commencement ceremony was a fitting culmination for years of hard work and perseverance interrupted by a pandemic. Others look forward to the promised in-person celebration dedicated to the Classes of 2020 and 2021, which will occur in the Fall 2021 semester.

Share this





# Kuda Biza is Lynn University's 2021 Distinguished Alumni

Inspired by the support he received at Lynn, Biza today pays it forward.

Lynn University named [Kuda Biza as its 2021 Distinguished Alumni](#) during its 55th Commencement ceremony on May 15. The university honors graduates who have achieved success in their chosen field, stayed active in the Lynn community, and made a positive difference in their local or global communities.

Upon receiving the title, Biza reflected on Lynn's significant impact on his life and his passion for helping others, including his alma mater.

Originally from Zimbabwe, Biza received a Dean's Scholarship, which allowed him to come to the U.S. and attend Lynn University. During his studies, Biza learned many lessons that have helped him achieve success throughout his career. Ever since Biza graduated from Lynn in 2009 and 2010, he worked hard to create and run successful, socially conscious businesses while remaining active within the Lynn community.

"When you give back to others, it has to come from an authentic place, and you have to do it with all your heart."

"Attending Lynn prepared me for success, as I learned the value of developing strong personal relationships," said Biza. "[In] Lynn being a smaller tight-knit community with a diverse student body, I was able to build relationships with people from all over the world and understand how to interact with people from diverse backgrounds."

While Biza's businesses are all unique, they share the goal of helping those in need. Nunbelievable, a cookie company, provides a meal to someone in need each time it sells one cookie. Biza said his businesses must have a greater purpose than producing revenue, and he believes that companies should positively contribute to society by genuinely helping those in need.

"When you give back to others, it has to come from an authentic place, and you have to do it with all your heart," said Biza. "There is this myth that one only needs to give a check to help others, but really, one only needs to find their purpose and provide their time to helping someone in need."

Along with helping those in need, Biza enjoys giving back to Lynn. Despite graduating over a decade ago, Biza remains engaged through Lynn's Social Impact Lab, where he mentors a Lynn+ Watson student. Biza remains grateful for the opportunities he had at Lynn, and he believes that all alumni play a significant role in the university's continued success.

"Lynn is in my blood," said Biza. "Attending Lynn was a game-changer because it impacted the trajectory of my life. I can never disconnect from it. I feel like it is my responsibility as an alumnus to remain engaged because alumni are fundamental for what Lynn is building."

Learn more about Biza's company, [Nunbelievable](#).



Biza co-founded #ThisIsMyEra to help children in Africa receive educational resources. For each planner the company sells, the company gives 4% to its partner, the World Vision Education Fund, to improve African schools.

Watch Kuda Biza's speech to the classes of 2020 and 2021.



Share this





# Mastering the long game

Lynn's golf teams come roaring back from the pandemic hiatus with a new perspective on the game.

Like another generation's moon landing or 9/11, the players and coaches in Lynn University's golf program will never forget where they were when the news hit that COVID-19 was bringing their season to a screeching halt.

Coach Andy Walker was at the range filming player Justin Wynen's swing when he received the fateful text from Athletics Director Devin Crosby.

"It was such an awful day," Walker said. "I think we all started crying on the spot. Not only was this team playing the best golf of their lives, they were playing the best golf of any college team I had ever seen play. We had just won a Division I tournament, and we were excited for our post-season run, going for a three-peat. And just like that, it was over."

Senior Helen Kreuzer was on the 13th hole in tournament play when Coach Marcelo Huarte showed up unexpectedly at her side.



Helen Kreuzer takes a swing as Coach Marcelo Huarte looks on.

"I was thinking, 'What's he doing?' He didn't walk tournaments with me. Normally he would walk with the freshmen," she said. "When we finished the round, he told me that they canceled the season because of the pandemic. He wanted to walk with me because it would be the last time ever. That's what we thought."

Within three days, the entire roster had flown home to their families.

"We have a very international team, with players from seven countries," Huarte said. "They left immediately for lockdown, flying off to Sweden, Germany, The Bahamas, Spain, Mexico, Italy. It was a tough experience for all of us."

"It was eerie," Walker said. "Everyone was gone. Campus empty. Just like that."

For seniors Kreuzer and Matilda Warren on the women's team and Toto Gana and Carlos Bustos on the men's team, it didn't look like it was just the season grinding to a stop. It was effectually the end of their college sports careers.

## Deep in the rough

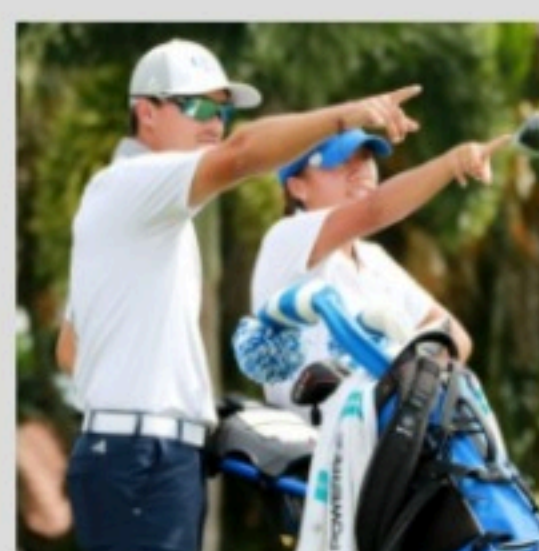
Every country instituted different protocols, but the common thread was that country clubs and public courses the worldwide were shut down. None of the students could hit the range. For some living in hot-spot regions, like sophomore Giovanni Manzoni from Italy, strict pandemic regulations meant he had to quarantine for two weeks before being allowed to see his family and then often couldn't leave home for days at a time.

"Of course, everyone was mainly worried about the health and safety of their families and friends," Walker said. "But they're also wondering, 'Is my college career gone?'"

## Coaching news

Leadership honors and a changing of the guard

[Read more](#)



## Welcome to virtual coaching

Lynn's golfers did what the rest of us did, hunkering down, worrying, watching too much TV. But not for long.

They're young athletes, anxious to play. So, they tapped in three-footers on makeshift greens in their living rooms and spent hours hitting irons into nets set up in their back yards. When they'd advanced beyond chipping into a bucket in the garden, they turned to the internet. They held team meetings online and received detailed swing analyses from their coaches via FaceTime. They were playing the long game now.

"The pandemic could have worked one of two ways: We could get better or we could get worse," Kreuzer said. "We decided to get better."

No one would call the unsettling days of lockdown a blessing, but they did have their rewards.

"Golf is a year-round sport," Huarte said. "Players rarely have time to work on mechanics, so this was our opportunity. We would do video calls, and I would analyze their swings."

It wasn't all just swing dynamics. It was also team dynamics. They gave each other tours of their houses (Walker said he loved this, seeing how everyone lived in their home countries and taking his own video very seriously, like a Lynn Golf version of MTV's "Crisis"). They discussed podcasts and read sports psychology books. They set team goals. Gana and teammate Jorge Villar also took it upon themselves to host Zoom calls, giving advice and encouragement to younger players.



Men's golfer Toto Gana crouches down for a closer look at his next putt.

"They matured so much in this process," Walker said. "We got better as a team, and I got better as a coach learning from them long-distance."

Most of all, they gained perspective.

"It was a challenging time, but I reminded the guys that it was times like this when we had to focus on what we were thankful for," Walker said. "Toto said he was thankful he could be back home in Chile for a while to see his little brothers grow up a bit. He had missed so much of that when he was away at college and playing in tournaments."

## Back in the swing of things

Spring season 2020 was cut short, and no post-season play or championships took place. Although some universities resumed sports for the Fall 2020 season, Lynn's Sunshine State Conference (SSC) division postponed a return until Spring 2021.

But what a return it was for Lynn, masks and all.

The men's team claimed their fifth SSC golf title, with junior Agustin Errazuriz winning the individual championship.

The women also claimed the SSC Championship—led by individual champion Kreuzer, who maintained her eligibility by enrolling in the MBA program at Lynn. Kreuzer also won the women's NCAA Division II individual title. The women's team narrowly missed taking home the tournament's team trophy after a heartbreaking tiebreaker.

"We were devastated," Kreuzer said. "But we made peace with it. Sometimes things just don't go in your favor. You have to bounce back."

Huarte said the team's no-golf isolation experience might have helped them recognize that a single result does not define success, nor a single setback failure.

"They get that it's not all about one tournament or one shot," he said. "They're so much more resilient now."

Share this







# Loyal donors support athletes through unprecedented seasons

Student athletes receive scholarships that help them stay in the game, even when games are cancelled.

As Lynn's golfers stepped up to every tee in the 2021 spring season, they knew the crowd was behind them, even if COVID-19 prevented supporters from joining the gallery.

"Donors to the program are so important to our players," said Marcelo Huarte, coach of Lynn's women's golf team. "A lot of our success wouldn't be possible without them."

Lynn's loyal supporters make all athletic scholarships possible. Contributions also help with travel expenses and training facilities like the [Snyder Center for Health and Wellness](#).

"We recruit high-level international athletes here," Huarte said. "We have unbelievable blue and white uniforms and golf bags and gear. That matters to an 18-year-old prospect. When a player like Helen Kreuzer wears her skirt back home in Germany, it gets people's attention and puts us on the map with younger players. The donations the golf program receives circle back to the school at large because we can expand our pool of applicants and players."

Mens' golf coach Andy Walker said loyal donors were an unexpected bonus to his experience coaching at Lynn.

"At other schools, even D-I schools, the coach has the pressure to go and fundraise for their salary and travel budget," he said. "Lynn made sure I didn't have to spend my time searching for money. I had every resource to make the team successful. My job was to coach golf, period. That's rare."



## Want to chip in?

Here are other ways you can show your support:

- Support one of our 19 teams
- Donate to the general athletics fund
- Name a locker
- Sponsor the Fighting Knights

Support athletics

Share this







Summer edition 2021  
**The 'bough'**

"The idea isn't to *live forever*, but to create *something that will*." – Andy Warhol

**On the cover**

Every tree has a story. Sun rises and sets over a large banyan by the Louis and Anne Green Center on the academic side of campus.

**LynnSight team**

**President:** Kevin M. Ross

**Senior Vice President of Development:** Gregory J. Malfitano '73, '75

**Chief Marketing Officer:** Sherrie Weldon

**Editor:** Stephanie Brown '17

**Writers:** Stephanie Brown '17, Brooke Chancey '21, Jamie D'Aria

**Guest contributors:** Petra Gunn; Leigh Brown Perkins; Taryn Super, class of 2022

**Creative director:** Gina M. Branigan

**Graphic designer:** Nicole Perron

**User experience designer:** Matt Williams

**Multimedia:** Juan Davila, Evan Musgrave '18

**Production:** Sara McAveney '17, Eleonora Lambertini '10

Like what you see?

**Subscribe today**

Get Lynn and LynnSight delivered to your inbox.

LynnSight is produced for alumni and friends by the Office of Marketing and Communication.

Send comments and feedback to [news@lynn.edu](mailto:news@lynn.edu), or write to us at:

Marketing and Communication  
Lynn University  
3601 N. Military Trail  
Boca Raton, FL 33431-5507

Share this

